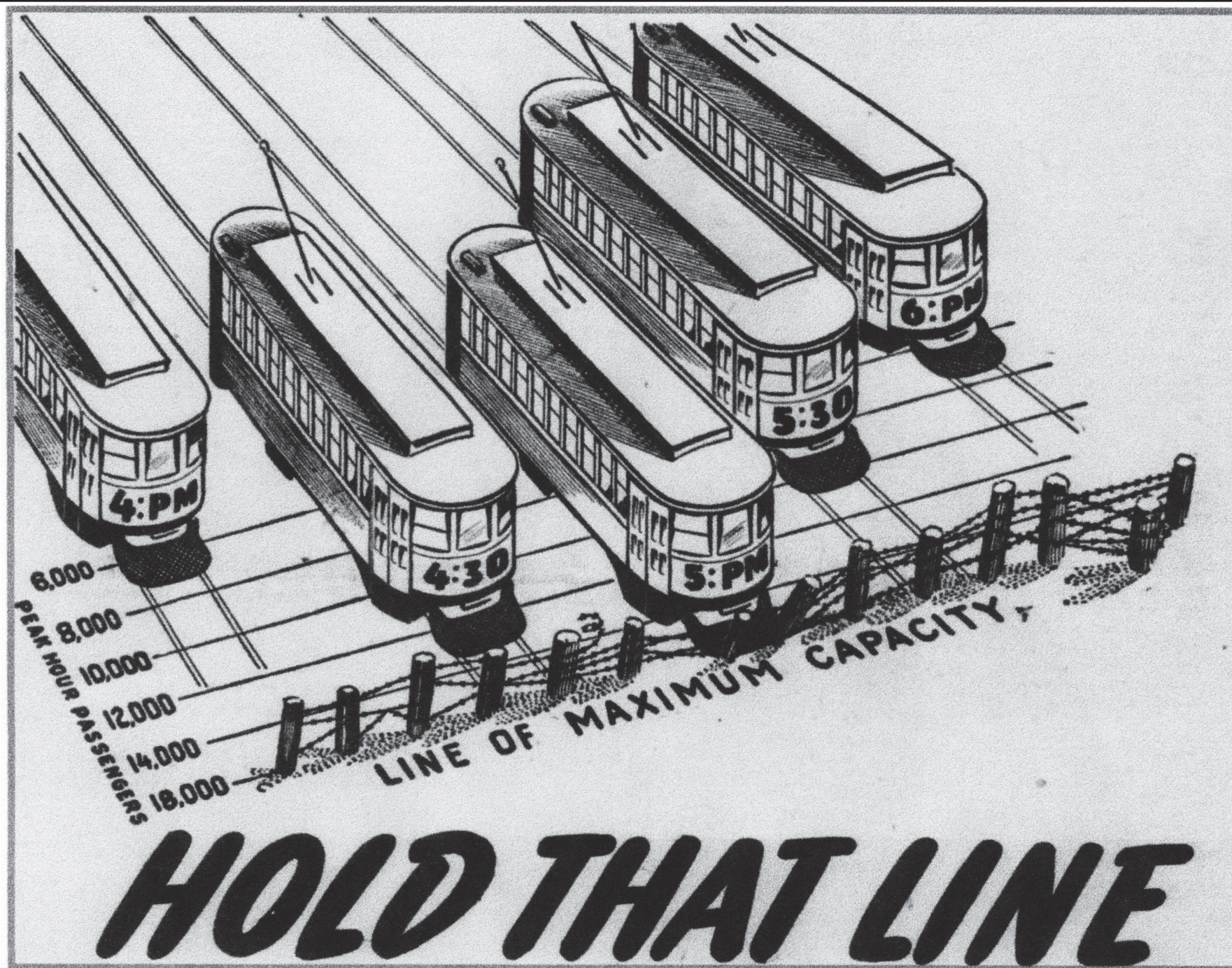




Fall 2021





On March 20, 1943, a Women's Army Corp band parades at 8th Street and Marquette Avenue, delaying a Chicago Avenue streetcar. Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

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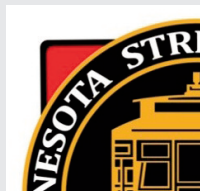
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***Twin Cities streetcars in
World War II***

-Aaron Isaacs

World War II presented Twin City Rapid Transit with an unprecedented operating challenge. In 1941 streetcar ridership was at an all-time low of 95 million, down from the high of 238 million in 1920. The fleet was much smaller, 726 cars compared to 1041 in 1920. War was declared on December 7, 1941 and almost immediately, ridership surged. Tire rationing began in 1942 and ridership for the year was 21 percent higher than 1941.

Gas rationing started in December 1942 and streetcar ridership increased another 34 percent in 1943. It kept rising, 6 percent in 1944 and 4 percent in 1945. Although the war had ended, 1946 ridership rose another 3 percent. Total it up and 1946 ridership was 86 percent higher than 1940.

The streetcar fleet couldn't be increased to meet the incredible demand, but the cars were used much more intensively. Before the war many made only a single trip each rush hour. A system of staggered work hours was implemented, making it possible for a streetcar to make up to three trips per rush hour, the equivalent of adding 300 streetcars to the fleet. Considerable service was added during non-rush hours, when plenty of idle streetcars were available. Because of this more intensive use, the number of passengers carried per streetcar increased 81 percent from 1941 to 1946.

TCRT's bus operations had grown through the 1930s as lightly traveled streetcar lines were converted to bus.

Even so, buses entered the war carrying only 11 percent of system ridership. TCRT was able to buy some buses during the war. They were used to extend service to the New Brighton arsenal, Holman Field, Wold-Chamberlain Field, and to some suburbs. They also supplemented streetcar service on some lines. By 1946 buses were carrying 14 percent of riders.

The changes and developments began happening right away in 1942. The newspapers of the day give us glimpses of the details, and the public's perception of them.

1-27-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

No less a personage than Gov. Harold E. Stassen is observing the tire rationing. He's using the streetcars almost daily for his shorter hops.

Fort Snelling revives

Activity at Fort Snelling, known as the sleepy "country club of the army",

increased dramatically. It was the reception center for Minnesota recruits.

7-3-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Streetcar shuttle service at Fort Snelling between the post entrance and the reception center about two miles distant is now on an all-day schedule. Continuous service from 6:30 am to 1 am is provided. Previous service had been from 6:30 am to 8 am, and from 4:15 pm to 1 am.

5-15-1944 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press

Frank Fitzpatrick leaned over the controls in the motorman's compartment of the streetcar while he waited for the car to fill. The veteran of 38 years of service with the street railway company operates the dummy line at Fort Snelling—traveling the half mile from the Seventh Street bridge to the Reception Center 23 times each way daily. Nicknamed "Pop" by the GI Joes who are his regular passengers, Fitzpatrick, 67 year old, works the early



Front cover: The sudden onset of World War II brought tire and gas rationing, driving commuters out of their automobiles onto public transit. Twin City Rapid Transit had only so much capacity, hence the call for staggered work hours to spread the peak loading. This ad from 1942 appeared in the Minneapolis Tribune.

Above: Soldiers and recruits ride the Fort Snelling shuttle. Wilbur Whittaker photo.



Above: Soldiers at Fort Snelling board a streetcar for St. Paul.
Below: Fear of Axis air raids led to blackout plans, which were tested in September, 1942.

ATTENTION Black-out Warning To Streetcar Riders

Please remember to take
the streetcar home tonight
so as to arrive before 10
P.M. on account of black-
out, 10:00 to 10:20 P.M.

shift, 6 am until 2 pm daily through Sunday. He hauls an average of 800 passengers daily, which means he's carried around 600,000 soldiers and their families on his short run.

Tears have become a common sight to "Pop". Troop trains leave frequently, and when they gone, Pop hauls the women back from the Reception Center.

"When they ride out to say goodbye", he says, "they want to cry but they don't. The lads don't like tears. It's when they come back that they let go. They sit all alone, and it doesn't make any difference how many people are in the car. They just cry. Sometimes," he added softly, "they get there too late, and the cookies and cake they brought out would have to be carried back. They throw the boxes away, right out the window. And the men do it too," he said. "I get fathers in here, just sitting and weeping."

5-17-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
Inauguration of all-night-every-night "owl" streetcar service from the Minneapolis loop to Fort Snelling was announced Saturday. The new service was launched in response to an item in the Fort Snelling Bulletin, post newspaper, which said, "many more soldiers would go to Minneapolis if they would not have to go back through St. Paul when they miss the 1 am car. "Owl" service from Minneapolis to the fort formerly was provided only on Sunday mornings.

5-6-42 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press
The St. Paul-Minneapolis express bus routes via University Avenue and Lake Street-Marshall Avenue are suspended for the duration of the war, freeing up 18 buses for use elsewhere.

To the golf course by streetcar

6-9-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
If and when it comes, gas rationing won't have too much effect on Twin City golfers. There are 12 golf courses which, by streetcar or bus, could plant you down within a block of the first tee. There are 12 more which, by the same means, could get you within anywhere from three blocks to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of your fairway fun. Only five are hard to reach.

4-27-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
Use of city streetcars for transporting players at Hilltop golf course to and from the links near Columbia Heights this summer was requested today by E. C. White, president of Hilltop Golf Association, operator of the course, before members of the city council waterworks committee. Pointing out a municipal car line from Central Avenue to the city filtration plant runs near the course, White asked two trips daily on Saturdays and Sundays from May through September be authorized, club member paying regular fares. He said the association would establish a guarantee fund.

9-10-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
During the 30-minute blackout test, "streetcars will stop and extinguish lights".

9-11-42 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press

Approximately 500 St. Paul motorists a month are putting up their cars, apparently retiring them from service for the duration of the war, Edwin F. Jones, head of the St. Paul war transportation committee, estimated today on the basis of traffic counts.

9-16-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
High school football start times move from 3:30 to 1:30 to reduce streetcar overcrowding in the rush hour.

9-22-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
The War Production Board asks cities to dig up abandoned streetcar rails for the war effort. The tracks in Excelsior are lifted for this purpose.

10-25-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
Twin City Rapid Transit Co. has gathered 450 tons of scrap from its streetcar and bus system this month, D. J. Strouse, company president, informed W. R. Stephens, chairman of the industrial section of the local salvage committee. Since the start of the war, the company has disposed of 3250 tons of streetcar rail and 400 tons of copper.

Gas rationing and staggered hours

It quickly became clear that gasoline rationing, scheduled to begin on December 1, 1942, would dramatically increase ridership. TCRT officials knew they couldn't handle the load so long as traditional 8 am to 5 pm work hours were in place. They campaigned successfully for staggered work hour to spread out the peak loads.

11-10-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Even greater staggering of working hours for the thousands who pour into the loop daily must be accomplished by the Office of Defense Transportation if Minneapolis is to avoid a crisis this winter, D. J. Strouse, president of Twin City Rapid Transit Company, warned Monday night. Strouse cited a 28 ½ percent increase in Minneapolis streetcar passenger volume during October over the corresponding month a year ago.

Gas rationing, which in other cities has boosted streetcar travel 12 to 25 percent, and the normal increase during winter months will make the situation critical unless adequate steps are taken.

Staggering of hours has already made it possible for 61 streetcars to make two trips each morning and evening into the loop during peak hours, he said. "Every time we can run a car on two such trips, loaded each time, it is as though an extra car has been added to the system."

Present streetcar schedules, Strouse said, now operate something like this:

In the morning, 202 cars make but one trip into the loop with full loads. At night, 237 take only one load out of the loop. "This is obviously a waste of manpower and equipment", Strouse said.

11-23-42 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press

Paul Light, columnist

I wonder how many St. Paulites realize what a problem confronts them after December 1. A careful check made by experts indicate 12,600 persons enter the loop district enroute to work between 7:30 and 8 am daily. In round figures, 6000 arrive by streetcar, 6000 by automobile and 600 on foot. Peak travel in the evening is between 5 and 5:30—workers and shoppers going home. Approximately 8000 use the streetcars, 8000 arrive in automobiles.

If half the people who now travel to work in automobiles shift to streetcars, there'll only be sufficient equipment to move two-thirds of them. The evening problem will be even more perplexing. There are 280 streetcars and 70 buses allocated to St. Paul.

11-24-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

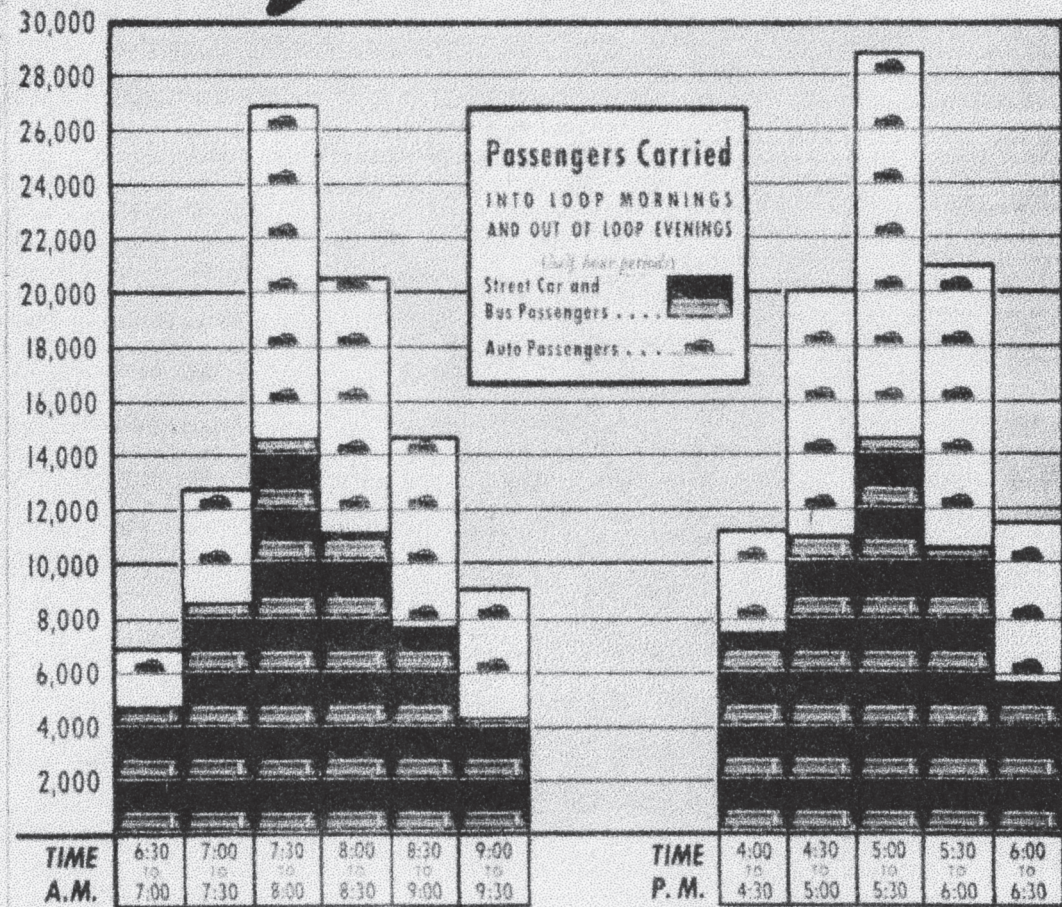
Preparations for gasoline rationing: Edina village council voted last night to co-operate with Morningside and St. Louis Park officials in providing glass enclosures for streetcar waiting sheds at Wooddale and Browndale avenues on the right-of-way of the Como-Hopkins car line.

12-1-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Anticipating first day of gas rationing

Every Minneapolis streetcar in running order will go into service Tuesday morning (December 1) to replace automobiles garaged by gasoline rationing which began at midnight Monday. Officials of the Minneapolis Street Railway said Monday night there would be 130 additional trips into the loop between 6:30 and 9:30 am and that the

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET TO WORK *After DEC. 1ST?*



With gas rationing starting in 10 days, TCRT published this appeal for staggered hours. Half of downtown commuters drove to work and there simply wasn't enough room on the streetcars if they persisted working 8 am to 5 pm.



The banner says it: "The Commonwealth Club of Minneapolis rides the streetcar to save tires." Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

same number would be added during the evening rush hours. That will make an increase of about 10 percent over present operating schedules.

Attempting to size up the transportation problem, streetcar officials said their latest survey showed 73,000 persons moved into the loop between 6:30 and 9:30 am each working day, 42,000 of them by

streetcar, most of the remainder by automobile.

12-27-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

With gasoline rationing adding thousands of motorists to swell the ranks of the tens of thousands of trolley and bus riders since December 1, the job of getting this multitude to and from work each day

required a campaign of strategy that took months to perfect.

The brunt of the planning fell on D. J. Strouse, president of the Minneapolis Street Railway, and his aides, H. W. Ralph, superintendent of schedules; Jeff Alexander, vice president and operations manager; and Fred Bjork, general superintendent of transportation. Strouse mar-

shalled his forces, car checkers, starters, motormen, conductors, months ago when the government first started its plan to ration gasoline.

In normal times the great bulk of the riders jammed on the cars during two 15-minute periods—7:45 to 8am and 5 to 5:15 pm. The almost standard "8 to 5" schedules of the working public made the streetcar business, in the words of Harry Ralph, the "most inefficient in the world." Large amounts of equipment were necessary, scores of operators had to be hired, to meet the needs of two 15-minutes peak periods daily.

Obviously, with the tremendously increased wartime business, everyone could not continue to ride the streetcars at the same time. The company didn't have enough cars and they couldn't get more to do a job like that.

So the "staggered hours" program was developed. More than 600 Minneapolis firms cooperated by staggering employees' work hours. This resulted in flattening the morning and evening peaks, spreading them to 7 to 9:30 am and 4:30 to 6:15 pm. Formerly, Ralph explained, a car could make only a single trip during the peak period; now it can make three. In effect, it's like adding 300 more cars to the system.

Sure the cars are still overcrowded. There is actually a streetcar oftener than every minute during the rush hours now. On Hennepin Avenue the other night there were 98 cars going south, by actual count, between 5 and 6 pm. During the same hour, 93 cars—one-way only—were counted on Marquette.

On Thursday last week, just an ordinary day, the Minneapolis Street Railway carried 329,015 passengers. That represented an increase of 43 percent over the same period a year ago, when the count was 231,620. About 40 percent use transfers, so by adding the 40 percent to 329,000, the total number of rides in a day come close to the half-million mark.

Ralph, who heads a tripled force of 45, has the job of constantly checking the pulse of the streetcar riding public. Surrounded by huge criss-crossed maps of the city and piles of schedule sheets, he works extra hours daily to smooth out the rough spots. That checker standing on a loop corner, counting as you pass on a streetcar, reports to him. He must know when the stores open and close, he must keep track of special sales likely to attract additional hordes of shoppers, he must know of unusual events—the time they start and end.

Constantly recurring problems are caused by what Ralph termed “the vagaries of the public”. People will crowd the streetcars at 4 pm one day, and the next, when extra cars have been plugged in to meet the demand, they won’t be there

until 4:30. Schedules are being adjusted continually, but streetcar officials don’t expect to be able to gauge the full effect of gas rationing until Christmas shopping is over and they have had the supreme test of a heavy snow storm. They hope the snow storm won’t come for another week or so.

To speed up loading in the loop during peak hours, the company installed “loaders” at several busy intersections. Equipped with change boxes and tokens, the loaders enable passengers to board cars at both gates, getting trolleys out of the way for the next car.

There’s the problem, making those 557 streetcars and buses carry some 500,000 passengers every work day, and keeping them in shape to continue doing it day after day.

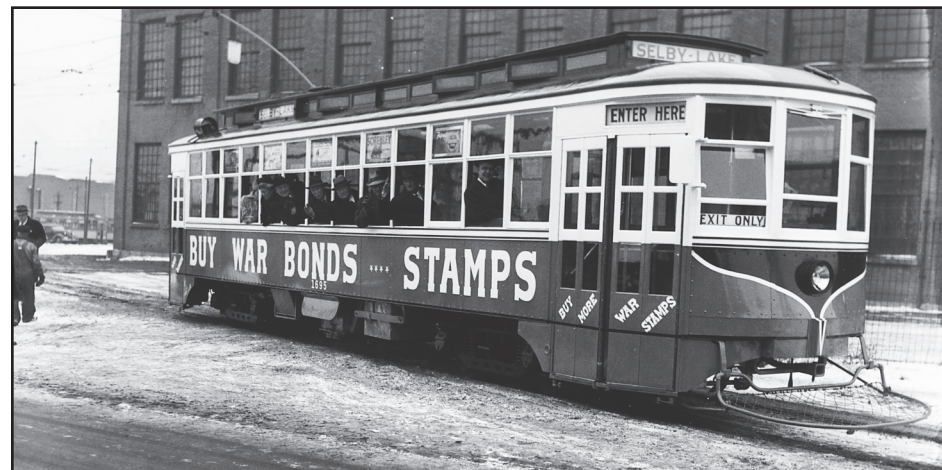


As gas rationing approached, newspaper columnist Cedric Adams wrote this primer for people not accustomed to riding streetcars.

11-15-42
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Cedric Adams' column

Any day now those of you who haven't done it for years will be hopping a streetcar two or more times a day, so let's take a little refresher course in trolley etiquette. I'll bet that 65 percent of you motorists don't even know



December 1942 saw two streetcars and two buses decorated to promote the sale of war bonds and stamps. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

the price of tokens. Well, they're six for 50 cents and the cash fare's a dime if you don't have a token. Most lines are pay-enter so you'll be doing everybody a favor if you have your token or fare ready when you board. Women searching through the 69 items in their purses for their tokens create quite a traffic clog.

It's not a bad idea to signal the motorman of the car you expect to board. That indicates you want to be a passenger. The signal may be the yoo-hoo type but there should be some arm movement and the movement should be more than a flutter of the fingertips.

After you get on the car, the proper form is to go as far toward the other end as possible. That makes subsequent loading easier. Some of you may not remember the little bell located on the strip between the windows. Push that as soon as the car leaves the stop before yours. Don't wait till the motorman is within 27 inches of your stop and expect him to heed it.

Inside the car etiquette includes not crossing one's legs. Crossed legs take up more room, you're liable to trip somebody and get sued and you may have a hole in your stocking.

Streetcar loads the minute gas rationing takes effect will surpass anything in histo-

ry, so if you've been allowing 30 minutes to get to work up to now by trolley, add another 10 or 15 minutes for the slow-up. The two bad morning hours are 8 and 8:30. At night, 5 is the brute with 5:30 no picnic. Some 22,000 people in Minneapolis take an 8 am car for work as it is. Think what the increase will mean. If all the cars in the whole system were out at the far end of the line in the morning they couldn't haul that load.

Don't always expect to make connections at the transfer point. Schedules can't be arranged that way. And ask for a transfer when you pay your fare. Happy riding.

12-10-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
Eavesdropped: "Were you lucky on your streetcar this morning?"

"I'll say. I got on early enough to get the last strap."

12-11-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
TCRT receives permission to add buses to streetcar routes.

12-12-42 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press

Two streetcars and two buses specially painted to promote War Bonds.



1-1-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Minneapolis Street Railway officials estimated streetcar traffic last night (New Year's Eve) and early today was heaviest "in at least 20 years". Regular service was augmented by 35 or 40 cars during the peak rush between 7:45 and 10:30 pm. Cars operated at intervals of 10, 12 and 15 minutes until 3 am. Night clubs and theaters were filled to absolute capacity. Patrons stood in block-long lines before loop theaters. Many were turned away because of lack of room. Other thousands attended midnight services at churches throughout the city.

Who gets a seat?

The crowding ignited a streetcar etiquette debate over who should have to stand while others sit.



1-23-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

A Harriet resident writes: "Please tell me, am I making a social error when I (a woman) get up and give my streetcar seat to a lady? I don't like to embarrass the men sitting down and still I can't stand to see elderly women standing. This morning on the Como-Harriet line, out of 48 passengers seated, 38 were full grown men, many of them probably on their way to soft chairs in the office. The aisle was occupied by a dozen or more women who had to stand all the way to the loop. I wonder if those same men would let their wives stand. Why not a little agitation for just common courtesy and chivalry in this regard? I sit down all day, so I don't mind giving up a seat. If you girls who have to stand all day at your work would wear little buttons that indicate that, then males would practice chivalry, I'm sure..."

1-26-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Support is coming in for the idea of working girls who stand all day wearing buttons so men may relinquish their trolley seats to them knowing the girls really deserve the ride seated. Helen, Hope and Sylvia, three wives, teamed up in sending a postcard which reads: "Can't you suggest some sort of button for expectant mothers" We're the ones who really need special attention on the streetcars these days. And we see scores of men every week who fail to give our condition a benefit."

6-17-44 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

What next, wonders Irma Hunt. She was coming home the other day

on the Como-Harriet streetcar, spotted an empty seat alongside another woman passenger and was about to take the seat when the woman spoke up sharply with, "I'm sorry, this seat is taken. He's out having a smoke."

2-24-43 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press

TCRT earnings increased 31 percent in 1942.

9-26-44 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

The season of More Passengers Per Streetcar is upon us, and there is a high correlation between it and the number of frayed dispositions. We noticed the passengers seem to fall into three general classes.

First there is the get-on-the-back-and-stay-there kind. Its counterpart is the get-on-the-front-and-stay-there group, which is further divided into (a) those who stand on the first step, causing a bottleneck and (b) those who drape themselves around the front center pole, causing the same obstruction a few steps inward. The third group consists of those who delay their exit too long and then rush by in a panic, elbowing and hammering their way through.

4-9-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune
Minnesota Railroad & Warehouse Commission order the price of tokens reduced from 6 for 50 cents to 6 for 45 cents. Cash fare remains at 10 cents.

11-10-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Token shortage reported by TCRT.

12-17-43 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

High school student Thomas Sasaki hired as part time streetcar conductor. According to the newspaper, Sasaki was the first person of Japanese heritage to be hired by the streetcar system.

The overtime strike

In January 1943, the federal War Labor Board approved an 8-cent pay increase for TCRT's unionized employees. However, almost a year later, the pay increase had not come through. In December 1943, TCRT trainmen started a two-week wildcat partial strike, refusing to work overtime until their pay increase was

implemented.

12-17-43 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*
TCRT ad says that the strike reduced service by about 25 percent.

12-19-43 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*
Weekend service to the New Brighton ordnance plant cancelled due to the overtime strike.

12-20-43 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*
Union officials today appealed to Minneapolis and St. Paul streetcar and bus operators to "stay on the job" despite growing resentment against the war labor board for delaying confirmation of an 8-cent hourly wage increase. Conviction of

employees that WLB has been "giving them a runaround" was strengthened following disclosure Friday that an appeal to Washington from a decision by a WLB panel in Chicago at first reported to have been filed Nov. 17, actually was not made until last week.

"We will only hurt ourselves by tying up streetcar and bus transportation with a strike," H. C. Wick, assistant business manager of the employees' union, declared. "This is no time to consider walking out," he said. "We'll get action a lot quicker if we keep the cars rolling."

Union officials today received a wire signed by Robert K. Burns, chairman of the Chicago regional WLB, informing them the case was in Washington for "final disposition" and that Washington officials had been advised of its "urgency".

Meanwhile, the union's stoppage of overtime work resulted in a sharp reduction of service over the weekend, with many persons attending church and other public gatherings delayed by lack of transportation.

TCRT officials said conditions today were substantially the same as Friday, first day of the overtime ban, with 188 streetcars and buses kept idle through lack of operators out of 817 normally in service during morning rush hours. They said 29 cars were withdrawn Sunday, out of 275 streetcars and buses scheduled for operation.

Under normal conditions, 25 extra cars would have been sent to the St. Paul auditorium where 8000 persons, many of them school children, attended a Christmas pageant Sunday afternoon. Only one extra car could be sent, but streetcars handled about 3500 of the crowd with some delay.

12-21-43 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*
Andrew Wigstrom, president and business manager of Twin Cities' streetcar employees' union, deplored the fact that normal operations necessitated working

men overtime. "Many men were exhausted and on the verge of breakdowns because of the overtime system," he said. "They could not have stood it much longer in any event."

Meanwhile, the union's restriction against overtime work, in effect since Friday in an effort to bring to a long-standing wage dispute to a head, resulted in the most serious traffic jam of the year Monday night, as thousands of bundle-laden shoppers attempted to board the streetcars and buses available in regular service.

Ordinarily 150 extra cars would have been put in service to handle the shopping crowds, but with no operators available for overtime work none could be put on.

Wigstrom, in a wire to John T. Long, labor board member, declared no strike situation exists in the Twin Cities and none would be countenanced. His telegram was in reply to a wire from Nathan Feinsinger, disputes director of WLB, asserting the board would not consider the wage dispute if there was any stoppage of work. Wigstrom said men were putting in their regular scheduled hours and "there is no law requiring them to work overtime."

1-8-44 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

The overtime "strike" of 2700 union employees of Twin City Rapid Transit Co. was ended last night after D. J. Strouse, president of the transit company, signed a stipulation the firm will not appeal war labor board approval of a \$600,000 retroactive wage increase for the employees.

H. C. Wick, assistant business manager of the union, directed posting of bulletins at stations and garages, instructing workers they were free to resume overtime work as requested by the company.

The union also agreed to resume immediately instruction of new crew members, a duty it halted after calling the overtime "strike".

Under the new contract with the company, the workers are to get an increase of



Besides hiring women, in 1943 TCRT hired a number of high school boys as part time conductors. Among them was Thomas Sasaki. According to the newspaper, he was the first person of Japanese heritage hired by TCRT. Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

8 cents an hour retroactive to Jan. 1, 1943, with a basic work week of 44 hours and time-and-a-half for overtime. During the overtime protest, an average of 150 cars and buses were out of operation daily.

7-27-44 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Streetcar service was taxed to capacity Wednesday night by thousands of Aquatennial parade goers. About 135 extra streetcars—the greatest number possible under existing circumstances—were on hand to take people out of downtown back home. The loop was declared clear by 12:30 am.

2-14-45 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

St. Paul streetcars traveled 821,025 car miles more in 1944 than in 1934. Last year each car averaged 37,469 miles, and in 1934, 23,389.

5-31-45 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Minneapolis streetcar seats may be decked out soon in a gaudy shade of green plastic if rattan coverings now used wear out faster than they can be replaced under wartime conditions. Company officials said today they already are testing new materials on several cars on the possibility rattan soon may be impossible to obtain. Rattan comes from the South Pacific, they said, and even though American troops recapture the source of supply, shipping difficulties probably will delay shipment for many months.

Returning to normal

The war in Europe ended May 8, 1945. The war against Japan ended August 15, 1945. Even so, it took a couple of years for wartime conditions to end. Indeed, in 1946 TCRT carried more passengers than in any of the war years.

8-26-45 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press

Lifting of war-time controls over local

bus, trolley, coach and streetcar service August 31 was announced today by the Office of Defense Transportation, but is not expected to have any immediate effect in St. Paul because of continued heavy streetcar traffic, despite the end of gas rationing. The ODT policy which went into effect in April 1942, called for a voluntary wartime program which included a system of staggered working hours; full use of streetcars and the elimination of all bus routes which duplicated streetcar service; diversion wherever possible of passengers from buses to streetcars, and fewer stops on transportation routes.

In announcing withdrawal of the order, J. Monroe Johnson, ODT director, said that "it may be many months before equipment and manpower are sufficiently available to enable local transit service to return to pre-war levels.

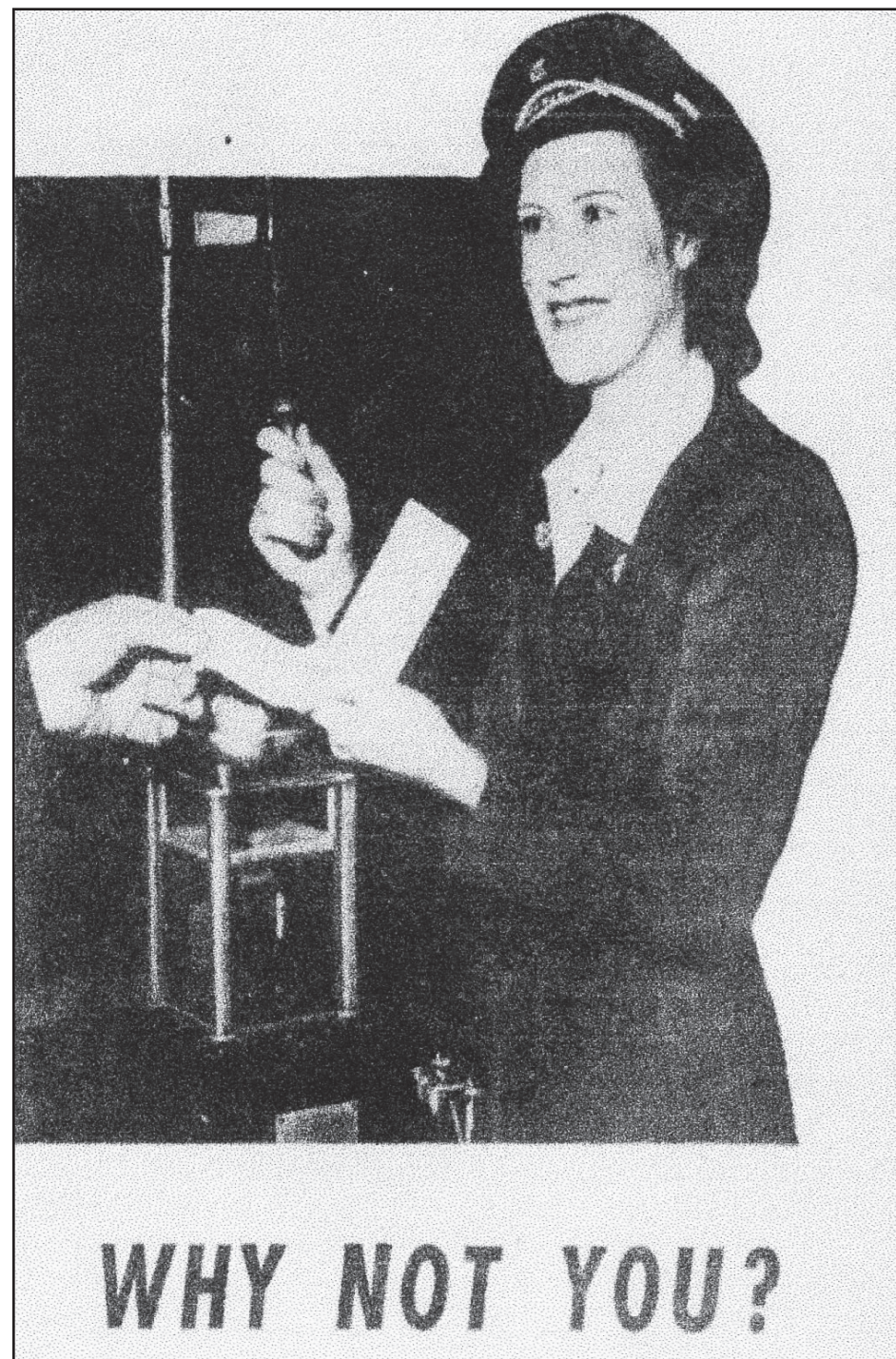
"If the program of staggered working hours collapses, it will have a serious effect on the entire community," said Robert Fitzsimmons, passenger agent of Twin City Lines.

Motorette newspaper stories

1943 saw the first motorettes hired. From our vantage point almost 80 years later, it's hard to realize how unprecedented it was to employ women in a "man's job". Here are some newspaper stories that capture the feel of the time.

10-19-42 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

It will be a feminine voice that will call out "Have your fares ready, please," on Minneapolis streetcars in the near future if a proposal made by Alderman Eric Hoyer is adopted. Hoyer suggested women be trained as conductors to relieve the manpower situation, and that male conductors be moved up front as motormen. His plan, he said, was for the duration of the war only.



6-28-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Classes for the first women in its history to be hired as streetcar motormen were started today by Twin City Rapid Transit at its Snelling Avenue station. The women will probably be called operators, rather than be labeled by trick names being used in some other cities, a company official said.

7-1-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Jobs for women: What's next?

With the Twin City Rapid Transit Company training women as streetcar conductors, motormen and bus drivers, Minneapolis males are beginning to ask themselves, in slightly flabbergasted tones, what the world is coming to. We can't answer for the whole world, but a quick check-up shows that Waterloo, Iowa, has employed two women as garbage collectors; that Baltimore is hiring women as street cleaners and that in Cleveland a big factory is taking on husky young girls as "guardettes". There's not much likelihood that the ladies of Minneapolis will shortly be pioneering in those fields—but it's a possibility. The manpower situation is becoming so acute that almost anything can happen.

8-6-43 St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press

For alleged abuse of a woman streetcar conductor, Lars Pershby, 41, was arrested Friday night on disorderly conduct charges. Conductor Albert Carson told police Pershby had abused Mrs. Selma Klawitter, a student conductor on the car.

8-23-43 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

So you want to be a girl streetcar motorman? Al right, then—we'll place a glass of water on the floor of an empty car. Now, sister, ease out that throttle and run through traffic, buck the semaphores and climb the hills—and see that not a drop is spilled. This test is being applied, according to C. C. Champlin, employment superintendent of Minneapolis Street Railway,



Salute TO WOMEN

Women everywhere are making marvelous contributions to victory by performing "man-sized" jobs in a capable and eager manner.

Because transportation is vital to winning the war we are especially proud of the women who are now operating our street cars and buses in the Twin Cities. Without them local service would be severely restricted due to an acute shortage of manpower . . . and without street car service, local war production would shrink materially.

These women, selected on the basis of character and ability, are assigned to runs only after a careful, thorough period of training. They are proud of their jobs and we are proud of the way they do them. On the basis of the first year's experience the record is most commendable. Particularly on the points concerning courtesy and safety.

We thank and compliment our patrons for their friendly acceptance and encouragement of these women when they were "new". Especially, we thank our male veterans for their fine spirit in continuing to carry the major part of the load and their valuable aid in coaching these newest members of our organization.

WANTED: GIRLS AND WOMEN

Between the ages of 21 and 40 to learn to operate buses and street cars. Good pay while learning easy work in essential industry.

APPLY EMPLOYMENT BUREAU—MIDWAY DISTRICT

1526 UNIVERSITY AVENUE



TWIN CITY LINES

just to see how steady the girls' nerves are.

No, he added, it isn't absolutely necessary to pass the water glass test to get a job up front. But it helps. He believes many of the applicants can do it—he himself went through it 20 years ago. "Women have a light touch and are plenty smooth on the air brakes," he remarked. And he thinks women motormen already employed are so good they'll continue on the new jobs even after the war.

1-22-44 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Letter to the editor

There is no doubt about the wonderful job women are doing to help win the war. Getting greasy faces, breaking their fingernails and ruining their hairdos is tough on them. But these fugitives from femininity didn't stop at being welders, riveters and similar jobs. They also decided to be streetcar motorwomen.

It's not that I'm prejudiced, because I've seen them driving automobiles, even if they do keep the body and fender shops in business. But just look at the papers. People are being injured because of these "Pedestrian Packing Mammals". It's getting so the only way we men can be safe is to join the army.

Motorette Marcella Fernelius saw the above letter and responded. By the way, her father was a motorman.

1-28-44 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

I'd like to add a few remarks to the criticism of our "pedestrian packing mammals" (Jan. 22). We didn't ask for conditions as they are today. If women hadn't proved they were competent, surely they wouldn't be chosen to take a man's place on the front end of a streetcar. We motorettes don't get paid for injuring people any more than men do, but for our efficiency and ability to do the job right. I'm sure the general public is with us 100 percent, except the few who can't bear the thought of a woman being out of the kitchen.



Marcella Fernelius.

Fernelius and her father weren't alone. There were also husbands and wives working together, along with some pairs of sisters.

6-27-44 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

First father-daughter team to work together on a Minneapolis streetcar is H. E. King and his daughter Muriel, shown as they pull out of the Nicollet Station for their daily run.

OK, women can run streetcars, but they better be ladylike.

8-14-45 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

A course in psychiatry has helped Mary-Elizabeth Unumb, senior at the University of Minnesota, to become the Twin Cities' most popular streetcar conductress. The second reason for Miss Unumb's success, streetcar officials say, lies in the fact she did not allow a pair of

slacks and a man's job to cause her to discard feminine charms and manners.

The popular conductress is a student of applied psychology and psychiatry and has worked in a mental hospital. "I don't mean that you learn how to please and handle people by studying border-line cases or psychotics," said Mary-Elizabeth, "but it surely helps!"

Streetcar officials say their No. 1 girl not only understands how to please people crowding together in a streetcar but goes out of the way to serve elderly people, children, strangers and even drunks. Mary-Elizabeth blames the casting aside of feminine charm and manners as the reason many girls cannot handle men's jobs. "No one likes a masculine girl even if she is handling a streetcar or operating a riveting machine," Mary-Elizabeth said. "I advise that a girl forget her slacks or uniform and turn on all the feminine charm possible if she wants to get along in a man's job."

The model conductress does not smoke, drink or swear but perfects herself in the social arts of makeup, conversation and dancing, she says.

Mix men and women in a previously all-male workplace and some fraternization was bound to happen.

4-3-45 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

There's a musical romance raging between a motorette on the 34th and North Bryant car and a motorman on a 28th and Robbinsdale car when they meet at Cedar and 34th. They have signals with their bell, proving again that everything happens on streetcars.

There were also unwelcome advances.

2-24-45 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

From Trolley Song to Swan Song in one act—that's the sad story of a thwarted 30-year old St. Paul Romeo whose heart strings went "Zing! Zing! Zing!" for



Helen Murphy

pretty brunette Helen Murphy, motorette of a South St. Paul streetcar. Helen discouraged his plea to "look into your dark eyes" but the persistent man stood beside her until a curve in the track sent his spinning headlong into the post that holds the token box. Romeo blacked out, was nursed back to consciousness at West Side General Hospital.

And finally, here are two on-the-job incidents.

9-14-44 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

A blind man being led across a street by a guide dog escaped with only a bruised right elbow Wednesday night when struck by a streetcar. He was saved from more serious injury by the coolness and quick action of the girl driver of the car. Donna Turbes, the motorette, was operating a westbound Selby-Lake car when she saw man and dog about 30 feet ahead. She threw on the brakes instantly, cutting down the momentum of the trolley, which skidded several feet along the rails before hitting the blind man. L. A. Anderson was thrown onto the fender. Rex the dog was unhurt.

2-21-46 *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

The first bandit to prey upon a streetcar motorette robbed Mrs. Elizabeth Pedersen at 12:40 am today after she had backed her car into the wye at 54th and Penn Avenue S.

A motorette remembrance

On Facebook we recently asked for memories of the streetcars. Sally Kmiecik Parks responded with this story and photo.

"Our mom, Sonja "Mitzi" Kmiecik was a Motorette during World War II. On Sundays I would pack a bag lunch and ride with her on the Bryant-Johnson line. I was so proud she was our mom. We got to talk during her short breaks. I remember the South end at 54th Street and Penn Avenue. There were just Victory Gardens past 54th Street. She told us the day the War ended she had 12 celebrating sailors on the "Cow Catcher" on the front of the street car as she drove down Hennepin Avenue."



Sonja Kmiecik. Sally Kmiecik Parks collection.

How big was the streetcar fleet?

TCRT built 1172 streetcars for its own use, but how many were in the fleet at any one time? It's easiest to answer that question beginning in 1913. By that year the original single truckers, open cars and the 20 American Car Company double truckers from 1892 had been retired. The 916-car fleet was entirely home-built. It continued to expand through 1917, when it reached its all-time peak of 1116. That was also the last year new standard cars were built.

TCRT must have felt some of its early wood-framed cars were surplus to its needs, because it sold 45 of them in 1918 to Seattle and Tacoma. 1920 saw an additional 20 wood-framed cars sold to Winnipeg. 15 of them were in dead storage inside the Snelling Shops building that burned in 1925.

Even though ridership dropped through the 1920s, the system track mileage increased by one-third, requiring more streetcars. TCRT kept running older cars and built 33 new light-weights. Thus the 1929 fleet had 1065 cars, down only 5 percent from the 1917 peak. In fact, it was a larger fleet than the peak ridership year of 1920, which was handled by only 1041 cars.

The Great Depression of the 1930s killed off the rest of the wood-framed cars. From 1929 to 1933, ridership dropped 40 percent. The wood-framed cars were both surplus and obsolete and all of them were scrapped by 1936 except for five that had been modified for double-ended shuttle operations.

The Lake Minnetonka, Stillwater and White Bear Lake suburban lines were converted to bus in 1932, reducing the track miles by 9 percent. With the long suburban lines gone, the 40 remaining high speeds were no longer needed and were stored out of service.



Burning high speed cars in 1938. St. Paul Pioneer Press photo.

Four of them, #1146-1149, earned a short reprieve. Rebuilt with smaller motors, they were assigned to the Inter-campus line.

The years 1938-1940 saw several of the lightly-patronized lines converted to bus, reducing track miles by another 6 percent. TCRT scrapped the remaining double enders, and 55 of the oldest cars with steel underframes, including all the suburban high speeds.

Thus TCRT entered World War II in 1941 with a fleet of 726 streetcars. That was less than at the start of the final abandonment in 1952. The post-war purchase of PCC cars swelled the fleet to 799 in 1949 and it remained at 780 in 1951, despite bus conversions of a few lines in 1948.

Ridership fluctuated faster than

fleet size could follow. That becomes apparent when you calculate the number of passengers carried per streetcar each year. From 178,872 in 1916, it swelled to 229,000 in 1920, the peak ridership year. By 1929, with fewer passengers spread over more route miles, it dropped to 151,057. In 1933, the depth of the Depression, it was 90,051, the lowest number ever.

Then came World War II, with rationing of gas and tires. TCRT must have regretted scrapping those 332 old streetcars before the war. Although the total system ridership never matched the peak year of 1920, the much smaller fleet was hard pressed to carry everyone. In 1945 and 1946 the passengers per streetcar hit new records of 236,318 and 237,948 respectively.

Working for TCRT

-Russ Olson

In early 1945 as a 14-year old, I wrote a letter to D J Strouse, president of TCRT asking about streetcar history and was invited to meet him at TCRT's office, which I did. We had an interesting conversation. At the end he offered me a summer job with TCRT in the accounting department, which I accepted. He also provided me with the schedule for PCC test car Pittsburgh 1547 (still in its Pittsburgh colors) together with tokens for car fare to St. Paul and return. That was an impressive ride. I started work in June 1945 at a salary of \$60 per month. Learning some accounting procedures came first. On occasion I was asked to deliver documents from Mr. Strouse to the company's legal firm as well as the Minneapolis Club and Minneapolis Athletic Club. The accounting department was responsible for all mail service in the general office building so when the company mail clerk left I was assigned that job which turned out to be of great benefit.

The general office building was located on the southeast corner of 11th and Hennepin. The main entrance was on 11th St. In the basement was the mailroom, blueprinting machines, used transfer storage and disposal, and more. The first floor contained the Treasurer's office and Department, Schedule Department, and Lost and Found room. The second floor was devoted entirely to the Controller's office and Accounting Department. The third floor was devoted to the various operating departments: Operations, Engineering, Track, Power, Traffic, Legal with library, and telephone switchboard. The entire south side of all three floors housed the 11th St. Substation. The fourth

floor contained the executive offices. A large space over the substation was devoted to old records storage, a fascinating place which I was inside only on two or three brief occasions.

The mailroom had an outside mailbox on the Hennepin Ave. side which had a chute to the basement mail room. USPS as well as company mail was deposited in this box. All this mail had to be sorted and distributed to the individual departmental slots on a large wall rack. There was a prescribed schedule and procedure for delivery and pickup throughout the building. This included picking up and placing mail bags on streetcars to/from St. Paul. Also involved walking to/from Bus Garage No. 1 on Currie Ave. with company mail. Thus I had the opportunity and pleasure to meet and talk to various officials and employees. On one occasion I was given a book of equipment data sheets that was a welcome and valuable gift. The blueprint room had a long window facing the mailroom so one occasion I watched them print Lake Minnetonka line right-of-way maps.

August VJ Day 1945 I went to work as usual but when I got there found they had decided to close the office in observance of the occasion. As I had an employee ticket book for free fares I decided to ride the Mahtomedi line for the first time. That was a most enjoyable experience. The Mahtomedi motorman was accommodating and decided I should write my name and department on the back of the ticket.

I had to go back to school so left in August 1945. I returned in July 1946 and worked through August 1946. This was all Accounting Department work and included learning how to operate various office machines. Not as interesting to a trolley fan as 1945 was but helped me decide on accounting as a career.

When Ed Nelson and I began working on Interurbans Special 14 I remembered the volumes of large scrapbooks in the General Superintendent's office that contained copies of all the operating bulletins issued. I was welcome to research them to my heart's content.

Harnessing electricity

-Aaron Isaacs

By now most Twin City Lines readers probably know that Twin Cities streetcars converted from horses to electric power during 1889-1891. The technological leap didn't happen overnight. Not surprisingly, it took independent experiments by multiple individuals to arrive at a practical solution. Although this is general history, not specific to Minnesota, it seemed like a good idea to cover it. This is a brief overview, drawn from these books available that members can check out in our Russell L. Olson Library.

Pioneers of Electric Railroading, by John R. Stevens

Time of the Trolley, by William D. Middleton

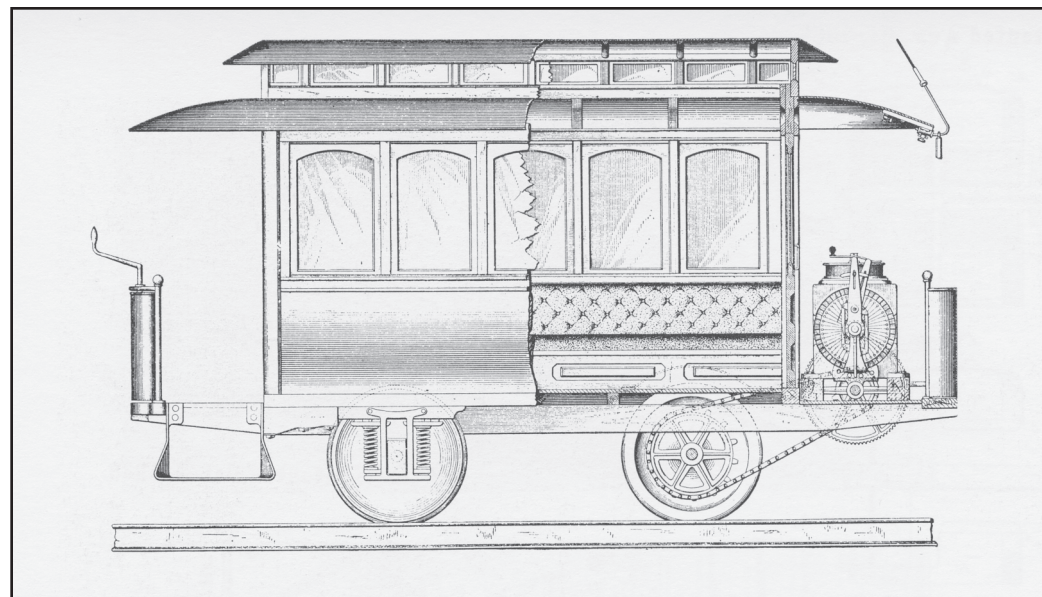
Trolley Car Treasury, by Frank Rowsome, Jr.

Frank Julian Sprague, Electrical Inventor & Engineer, by William D. Middleton

The beginnings of electricity

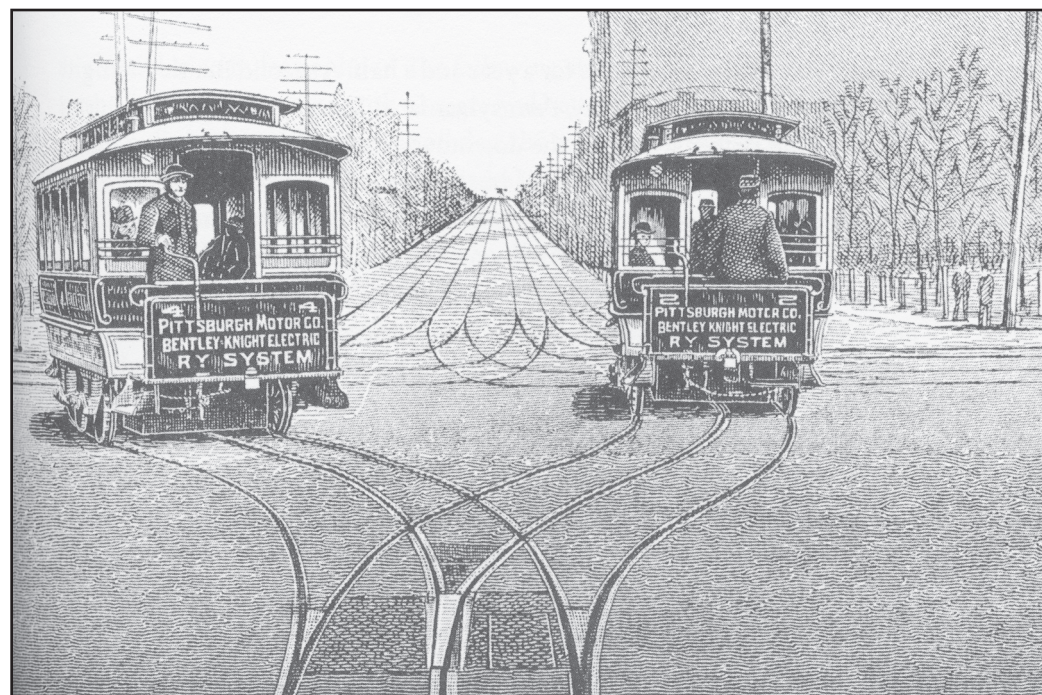
The first electric motors were developed in the 1830s and 40s. A few inventors used them to power model trains and even a five-ton locomotive. Besides being very primitive, all relied on storage batteries for power, which were completely insufficient for anything beyond small experiments.

The first big application of electricity was the telegraph, patented by Samuel Morse in 1838. Long-range transmis-



Above: Van Depoele mounted the motor on the front platform and used a chain to transmit the power. An axle on springs didn't work with a fixed-length chain.

Below: The Bentley-Knight system collected power from underground conduits. It was much costlier than overhead wire, but conduits were used in New York City and Washington, DC.



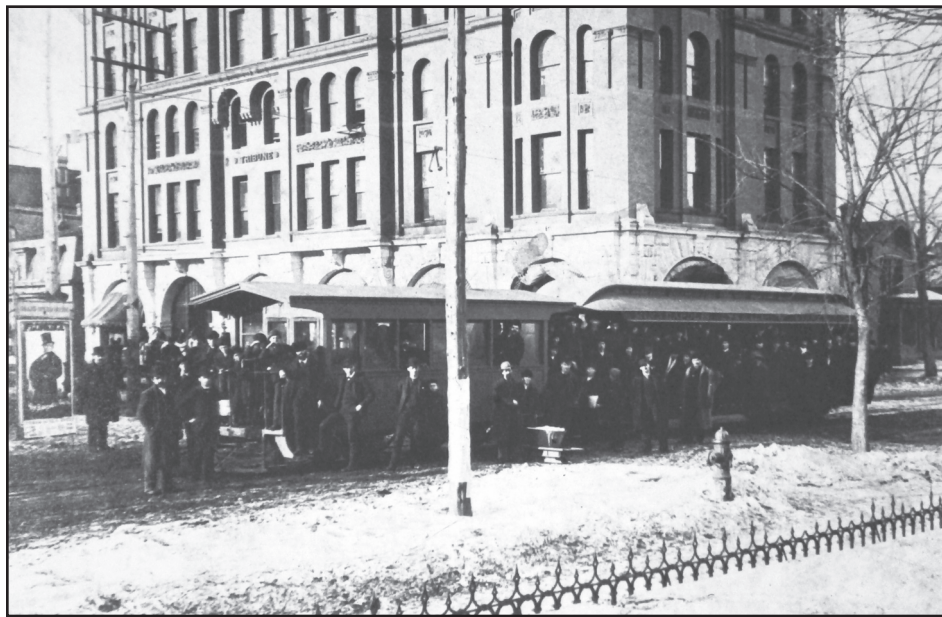
sion between Washington and Baltimore was accomplished in 1843. The first commercial telegraph line in North America opened between New York and Washington in 1846. Meanwhile in Europe, German Werner von Siemens in 1847 founded the telegraph manufacturing company that evolved into today's electrical giant Siemens.

In 1866 Siemens was the first to create a dynamo to generate electricity from the burning of fossil fuel, freeing electric power from the severe limitations of batteries. By the late 1870s, Siemens designed an electric locomotive for use in underground mines. In 1879 he adapted that design to pull a miniature train around the grounds of the Berlin Trade Fair. Over a 4-month period, it ran reliably and carried 86,000 passengers. Siemens' success is generally credited with starting the real race to perfect electric streetcars.

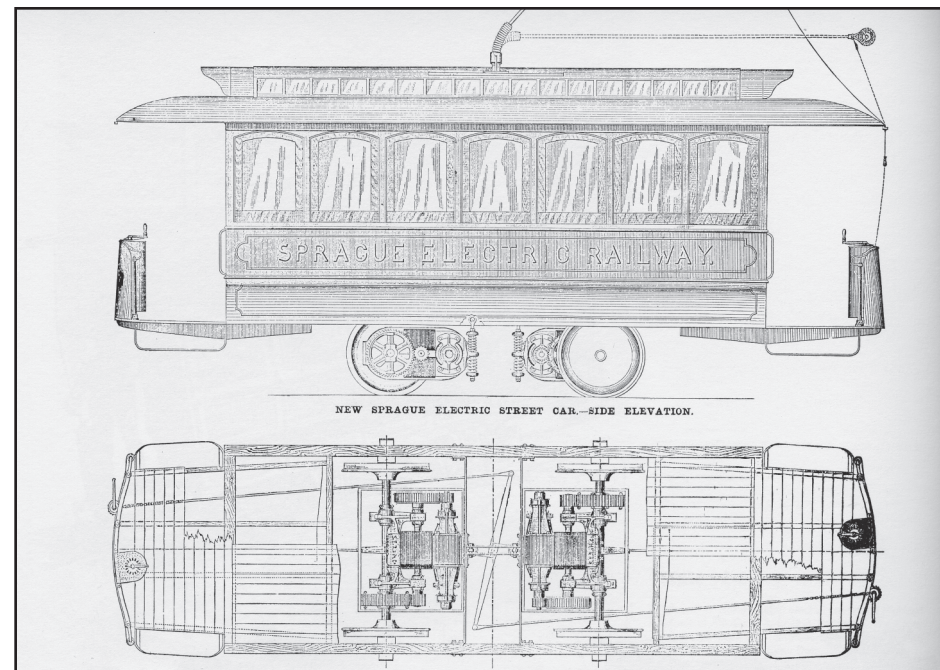
The competitors

Starting in 1880, competing inventors in both Europe and North America tackled the thorny problem of reliably replacing horses, steam locomotives and cable cars with electric streetcars. There wasn't much trans-Atlantic cooperation, so we'll stick with the American inventors. First to produce something tangible was Thomas Edison, who in 1880 built a locomotive which he ran on 1/3 mile of track at his Menlo Park, New Jersey laboratory. It turned out to be a one-off and Edison turned his attention to power generation and distribution, both major hurdles to overcome before electric streetcars could be practical.

1880 also saw an experimental electric railroad in Stockbridge, Massachusetts by an inventor named Stephen Field. In 1883 he joined with Edison to form the grandly named



For a few months in 1885 and again in 1886, a Van Depoele electric locomotive was tested on the Minneapolis, Lyndale & Minnetonka on 1st Avenue S. (Marquette).



Inventor Frank Sprague's patents became the standard for electric streetcars. He went on perfect multiple-unit control, making multi-car electric trains possible.

Electric Railway Company of the United States. According to *Pioneers of Electric Railroading*, Edison was not active in the company. It set up small demonstration railroads at expositions in Chicago and Louisville, but that was the extent of its efforts.

Several independent inventors built experimental lines that passed into obscurity. A handful graduated to the installation of working street railways. Edward Bentley, a patent attorney, joined with United States Patent Office staffer Walter Knight to open the first commercial electric line in Cleveland in 1884. They went on to equip three more lines in 1888.

The development of the electric streetcar really came down to a competition between Leo Daft, Charles Van Depoele and Frank Sprague. For an intense period from 1884 to 1888, they

refined the technology and zeroed in on the solutions that would actually work in the unforgiving environment of a street railway. Daft equipped ten lines in 1885-1888. One experiment that used the Daft patents was the short-lived South St. Paul monorail, which ran for a few months in 1888.

Van Depoele equipped his first commercially viable line in Chicago in 1884. From 1886 to 1888 he added 15 more. Van Depoele also did the experimental electrification of the Minneapolis, Lyndale & Minnetonka within downtown Minneapolis. It ran for a couple months each in 1885 and 1886 before being discontinued.

Frank Sprague was a latecomer to the competition, but his breakthrough design for truck-mounted motors and his successful electrification of the Richmond, Virginia system in 1888 led



Above: A streetcar by Daft pulling a trolley to collect power.
 Right: An early streetcar with a counterweighted trolley pole. It would bounce off the wire, interrupting power. Strong springs replaced counterweights.

to 15 more installations that year. His patents were used to create the Stillwater Street Railway, Minnesota's first viable electrification, in June 1889. The Minneapolis Street Railway and the St. Paul City Railway electrified their first lines with Sprague patents in December 1889 and January 1890. In the end, Sprague would win the race, but Daft and Van Depoele were worthy adversaries and advanced the science.

Solving problem after problem

Power distribution

The earliest experimental electrifications transmitted the power through the rails (or employed a third rail) and the car wheels. This didn't last long, given the obvious risk of shocking anyone stepping on them. Pooling water could short out the whole system. A couple of the lesser inventors tried an underground conduit system

where the streetcar collected power through a slot in the street. Underground conduit was actually adopted as the permanent system in Washington, DC and New York City, where overhead wires were outlawed as unsightly. Expensive to build and maintain, conduit systems were rare exceptions.

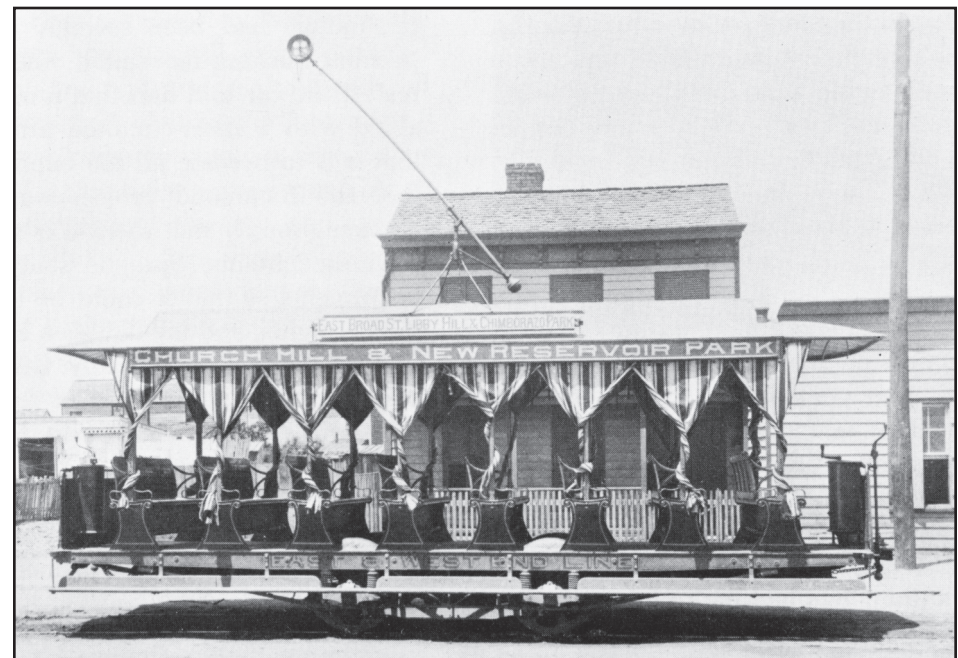
Overhead wire came next, but it took several years for trolley poles to emerge as the correct solution. First came the "troller" (clearly the origin of "trolley"), a small 4-wheeled cart that rolled along the top of a pair of wires, one positive and one negative. It was connected to the streetcar by a loose wire, so it "trolled" behind the car. Double-flanged wheels were supposed to keep it from falling off the wire, at least that was the idea. In fact trollers frequently fell, crashing alarmingly onto the car roof and requiring someone with a ladder to put them back on the wires.

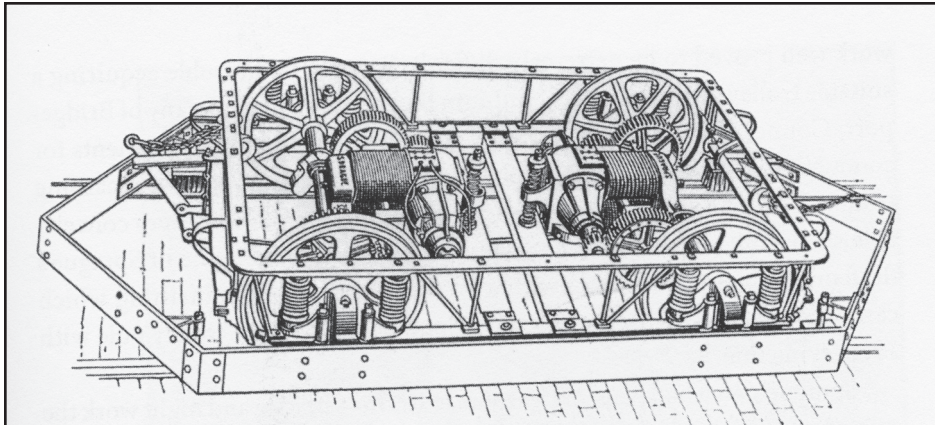
Anyone familiar with trolley poles

and overhead wires knows there is always some danger of dewirement when changing tracks. Overhead frogs are touchy and must be configured properly to work. Now imagine trying to make a two-wire, 4-wheeled troller navigate a switch. Trollers were not the right solution.

A trolley pole running along the underside of the wire was the right idea, but it took a few years to work out the mechanics. The first poles used counterweights on the bottom, but the upward pressure wasn't constant enough to avoid dewirements or loss of power when contact was interrupted. The solution was steel springs strong enough to keep the trolley wheel in constant contact with the wire regardless how the car or the wire bounced around.

Having committed to only a single wire for current collection, the track had to become the negative return to the power house. That required bonding the rails together end-to-end to





Sprague's "wheelbarrow" method for mounting motors became the industry standard.

avoid gaps in the circuit. A couple of cities, notably Cincinnati, used a two-wire system requiring two trolley poles.

Early voltages were low, around 250 volts. It took awhile for the 600 volt standard to become established.

Motor problems

The early motors used copper or brass brushes and they simply weren't durable, often failing in a day or so. It was Van Depoele who discovered that carbon brushes were long wearing, a major step toward reliability. Another early problem was motors burning out due to poorly wound fields and inadequate insulation. Reliability was achieved gradually solved through trial and error.

The electrical/mechanical interface

In order to provide a non-jarring ride, the end of the axles were mounted on springs. This meant the car body moved up and down relative to the axles, which also moved slightly over irregular track. The Daft and Van Depoele design placed the motors inside or under the car body, using chain drives to power the axles. It was a fatal flaw, as the constant tension of

the chain drive couldn't adjust to the bouncing of the car body or poor track.

It was Frank Sprague who solved the problem with what was called the "wheelbarrow mount". The motors were located on the truck and directly geared to the axles. The gear teeth supported one side of the motor. The other side of the motor was suspended from the truck frame on springs. This allowed the spring-mounted end of the motor to move slightly up and down, while the gears remained properly engaged. There was also an early problem of incorrect gear ratios causing motors to overheat climbing hills.

The technology takes off

Because they were a couple of years ahead of Sprague, Daft and Van Depoele were able to sell their imperfect technologies to electrify the horsecars of multiple cities. It should be remembered that even in their primitive form, electric streetcars were faster and much less expensive to operate than horse cars, so there was a huge incentive to try the unproven inventions.

In 1888 Van Depoele sold his patents to the Thompson-Houston Company, which had developed a streetcar motor

of its own in 1887. Under Thompson-Houston, nine more systems were electrified with the Van Depoele patents in 1888.

After a decade on the sidelines, Thomas Edison's company Edison General Electric bought out Sprague in 1889. By 1891 some 200 street railways had electrified using the Sprague patents. Because they were clearly superior, almost all the systems electrified by Daft and Van Depoele were converted to Sprague technology by the mid-1890s and it became the industry standard. Van Depoele himself passed away unexpectedly in 1892 at age 46. Thompson-Houston and Edison General Electric merged in 1892 to form General Electric, which dominated the production of motors, controllers and electrical gears for as long as there were streetcars.

La Crosse's last streetcar line

-Jack Galloway

Reprinted from the Winter 1981 issue of Scale Model Traction and Trolleys Quarterly

It has been almost 40 years, as I look back, all the way to 1943 when a friend of mine, Art Ross and I planned a weekend trip to La Crosse, Wisconsin. La Crosse has one lone streetcar route, known simply as the northside line. Destined for abandonment years before, the line was preserved through wartime legislation, thus the tired old cars would operate over the route until the duration of World War II.

We arrived in the morning, via the Milwaukee Road's Hiawatha. After collecting our luggage we located the streetcar line and waited to board a car enroute to the downtown area. It wasn't long before an orange and cream colored car appeared. We climbed

aboard, paid our fare and settled into the yellow rattan seats. The car was equipped with maximum traction trucks and was slow and noisy, but to a trolley nut this was music to our ears. As Art enjoyed the ride I looked over the interior of the car. The woodwork was all mahogany and the ceiling was painted white. Years ago these were two-man cars but were converted to one man operation with a treadle-operated rear door.

As we traveled toward the downtown area I noticed that the line consisted mostly of double track. Soon we arrived at a grade crossing with the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. The motorman stopped the car, got out and walked up to the tracks to see if all was clear, then returned to the car and slowly proceeded across. Further on we came upon the car barn and made a mental note of the location as we certainly planned a future visit.

As the car entered the downtown area we suddenly turned east, then north onto a long loop which went past the courthouse. About halfway through this loop the car pulled to a stop at the intersection of 4th and Main Streets. We learned that this was the end of the line and the downtown area's main transfer point. All the buses and streetcars met here every 15 minutes. As we prepared to exit we headed toward the rear of the car. "Hey", cried the motorman, "On 4th and Main everyone gets off at the front!". Two properly chagrined young men did an about-face then walked to the front of the car and got off.

After a nice hot meal and a bit of exploring we found a hotel on 4th Street. Soon we were unpacked and once again found ourselves riding the streetcar. This time we were headed toward the car barn and office of the Mississippi Valley Public Service

Company. We entered the office and asked permission to photograph the streetcars in and around the barn. Receiving permission, we were then introduced to the master mechanic. I remember he was very patient with us.

He explained that in the 1930s the city had three streetcar lines. Two lines had already been replaced by buses. He went on to say that this line had been scheduled for replacement but the Office of Defense Transportation stepped in forbidding the substitution. These were war years and rubber and gasoline were needed for the war effort. He said he was doing everything possible to keep the cars running and it sounded as if he were performing a labor of love.

We had to be careful while taking our pictures around the carbarn because it was located in an industrial area. During wartime there could be problems for someone snapping too many photos. We soon finished our photographing, bid farewell to the master mechanic and caught a streetcar that took us back to our hotel.

We spent the entire Sunday morning riding the streetcars and taking pictures along the line. All too soon it was time for us to check out of our hotel and catch the streetcar for the last ride back to the Milwaukee Road station. It wasn't long before we heard the Afternoon Hiawatha approaching, right on schedule. Right on schedule, it whisked us away, back to our home in Milwaukee. It was a memorable ride on one of America's finest trains, but that is another story.

The La Crosse car line was replaced with buses in 1945, leaving Milwaukee the only operating streetcars in the state.

Bottom left: Passing the carbarn at 3rd and Copeland. Bottom right: Passing the C&NW depot. All Frank Butts photos.



Above: On the north side.

Below: Copeland Avenue bridge over the Milwaukee Road.



Above: On the downtown loop.

Below: At or near the north end of the line. Mississippi Valley Public Service also owned the Winona transit system. This is the same color scheme as our Winona #10 (see rear cover).



The Selby-Lake in Uptown

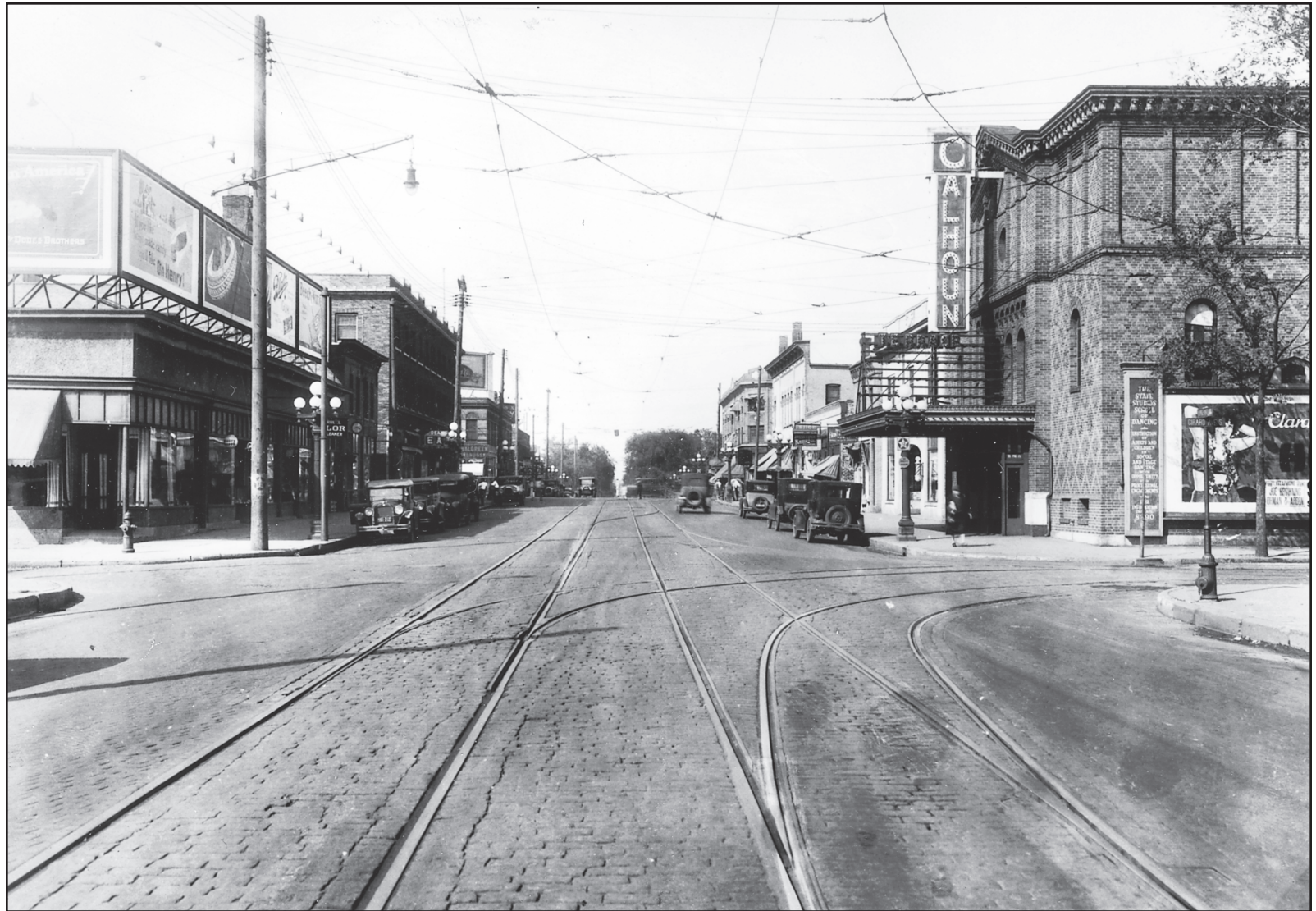
Because of traffic and later track changes, the western terminus of the Selby-Lake line in Uptown changed twice. When it opened in 1905, the whole point was to connect at Lake Street and Hennepin Avenue with the Como-Harriet, Como-Hopkins and Lake-Minnetonka lines, as well as the St. Louis Park line a block away at Lagoon and Hennepin. In 1913 the Oak-Harriet line was added to the mix.

A wye was built in the intersection of Lake and Hennepin. After turning on the wye, the Selby-Lake cars took their lay-over facing east in the middle of Lake Street.

Wying out in the busy Lake and Hennepin intersection was problematic, so in 1909 a wye was built one short block east in the intersection of Lake and Girard Avenue. After wying, cars backed down the westbound track to Hennepin to lay over and load. That still partially blocked Lake Street most of the time. After laying over, St. Paul-bound cars used a crossover to reach the eastbound track.

Not acceptable, in the opinion of a 1939 letter to the editor writer.

"Flagrant disobedience



Lake and Girard, looking toward Hennepin about 1930. Note the crossover track.

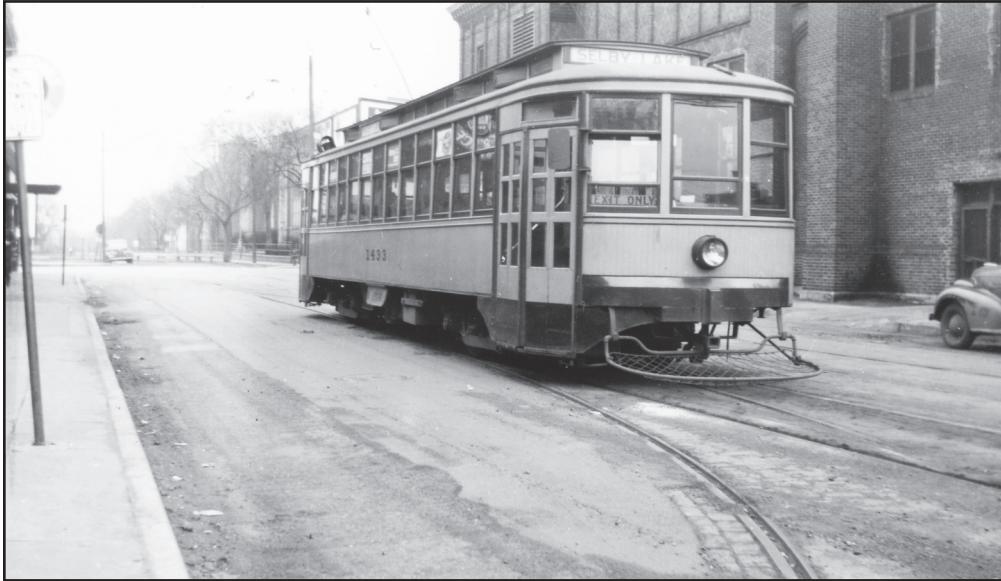
of our traffic regulations exists today on Lake Street between Girard and Hennepin. The westbound Selby-Lake stops at Girard, emitting passengers who have to walk the extra block to transfer. After perpetrating this minor inconvenience, it wyes backward to Lake Street and proceeds in crab fashion to Hennepin where it awaits new passengers. This not only appropriates valuable space but

presents a constant hazard to people running to catch the car.

After waiting the necessary length of time, it proceeds approximately half a block down the left side of the street, dangerously opposing oncoming traffic and confusing motorists. This arrangement may have

proved satisfactory in the horse and buggy days, but times have changed."

In 1913 a new substation was built on Girard half a block north of Lake Street and the wye track was extended to it. A second wye was added at the substation in 1924 to turn work cars.

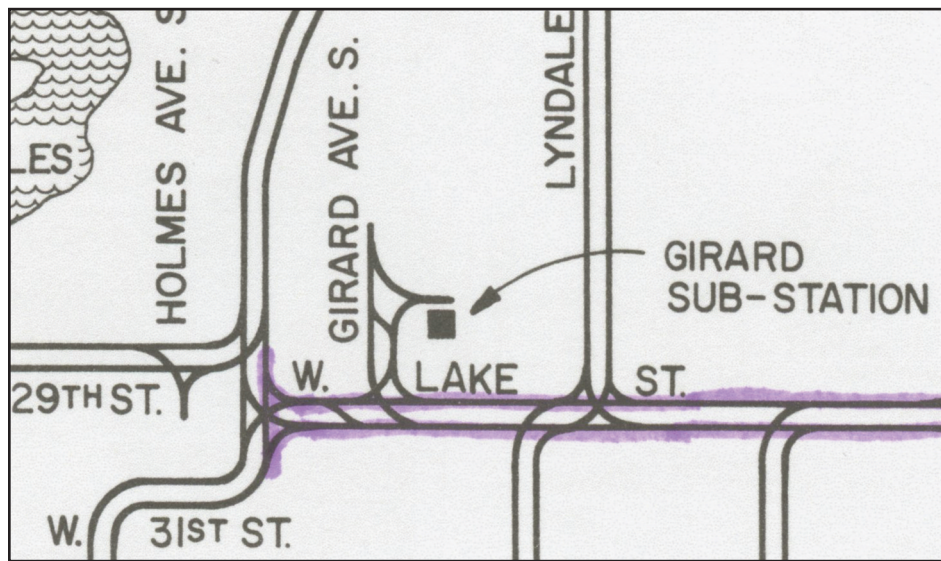


This clockwise sequence follows a streetcar around the Girard Substation wye.
Above: Having turned onto Girard, a car is about to enter the wye.
Below: A car backs from the wye onto Girard. Bob Selle photo.



Above: On the wye next to the substation. Norman Rolfe photo.
Below: Finished wying and facing south on Girard. The barrier in the distance marks the edge of the Milwaukee Road 29th Street trench. Kirt Blewett photo.



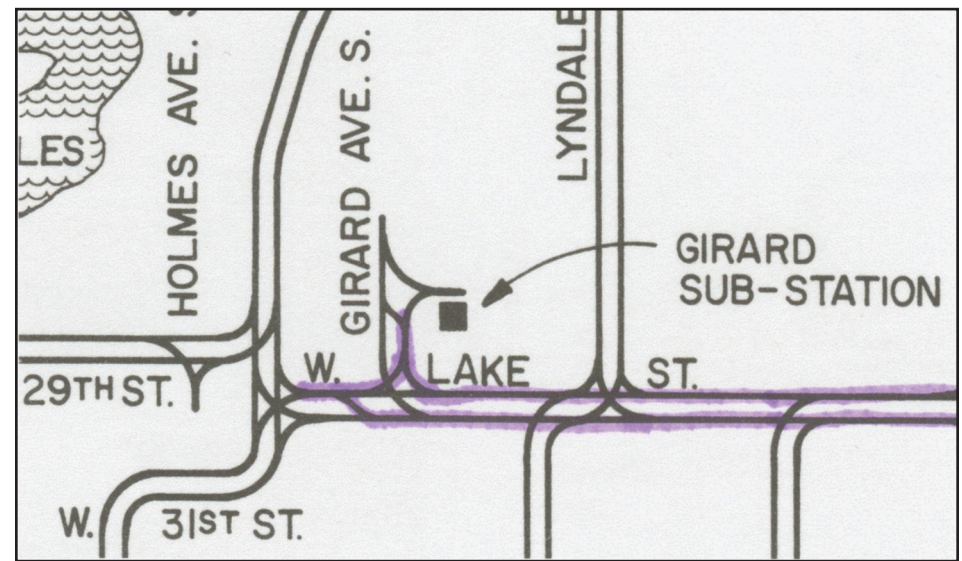


Above: From 1905 to 1909 the Selby-Lake cars wye out in the intersection of Lake and Hennepin, then took their layover facing east on Lake Street.
Below: Looking across Lake Street at Girard Avenue. Gene Corbey photo.

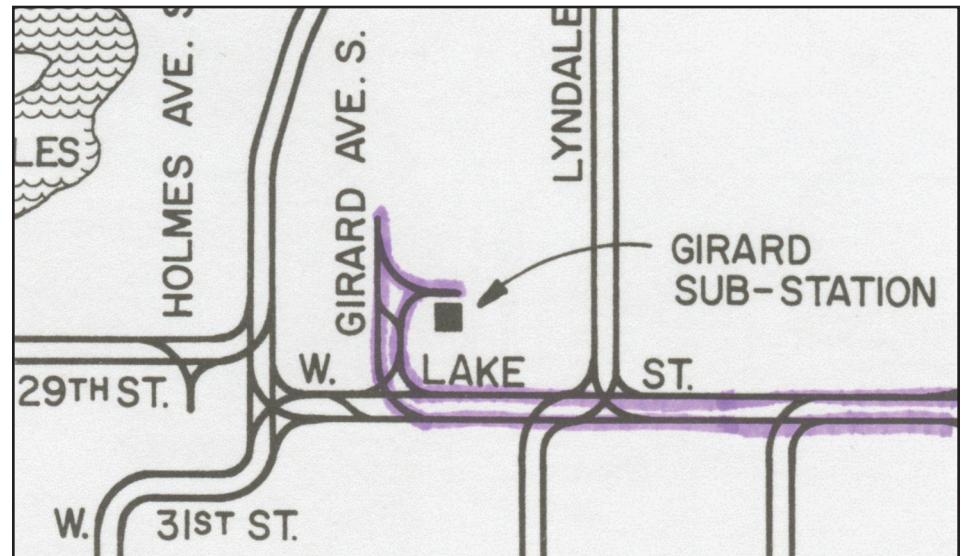


At the same time a crossover was added on Girard to access the right turn track onto Lake Street. However,

it was not until 1946 that Selby-Lake cars vacated the layover in Lake Street. They began using the substation wye



Above: From 1909 to 1946 the Selby-Lake cars wye out in the intersection of Lake and Girard, then backed west on Lake Street to Hennepin. After layover they ran against traffic for half a block, then took the crossover to the eastbound lane.
Below: Above: From 1946 to 1953 the Selby-Lake cars turned around on the Girard Substation wye, then laid over on southbound Girard Avenue at Lake Street.



to turn around, then laid over and boarded passengers on Girard, alongside the Calhoun Theater just before

Lake Street. From there they turned east onto Lake Street.



Above left: The car is facing south on Girard. The wye is at right. In the foreground is the crossover track, used to access westbound Lake Street. Bob Selle photo.

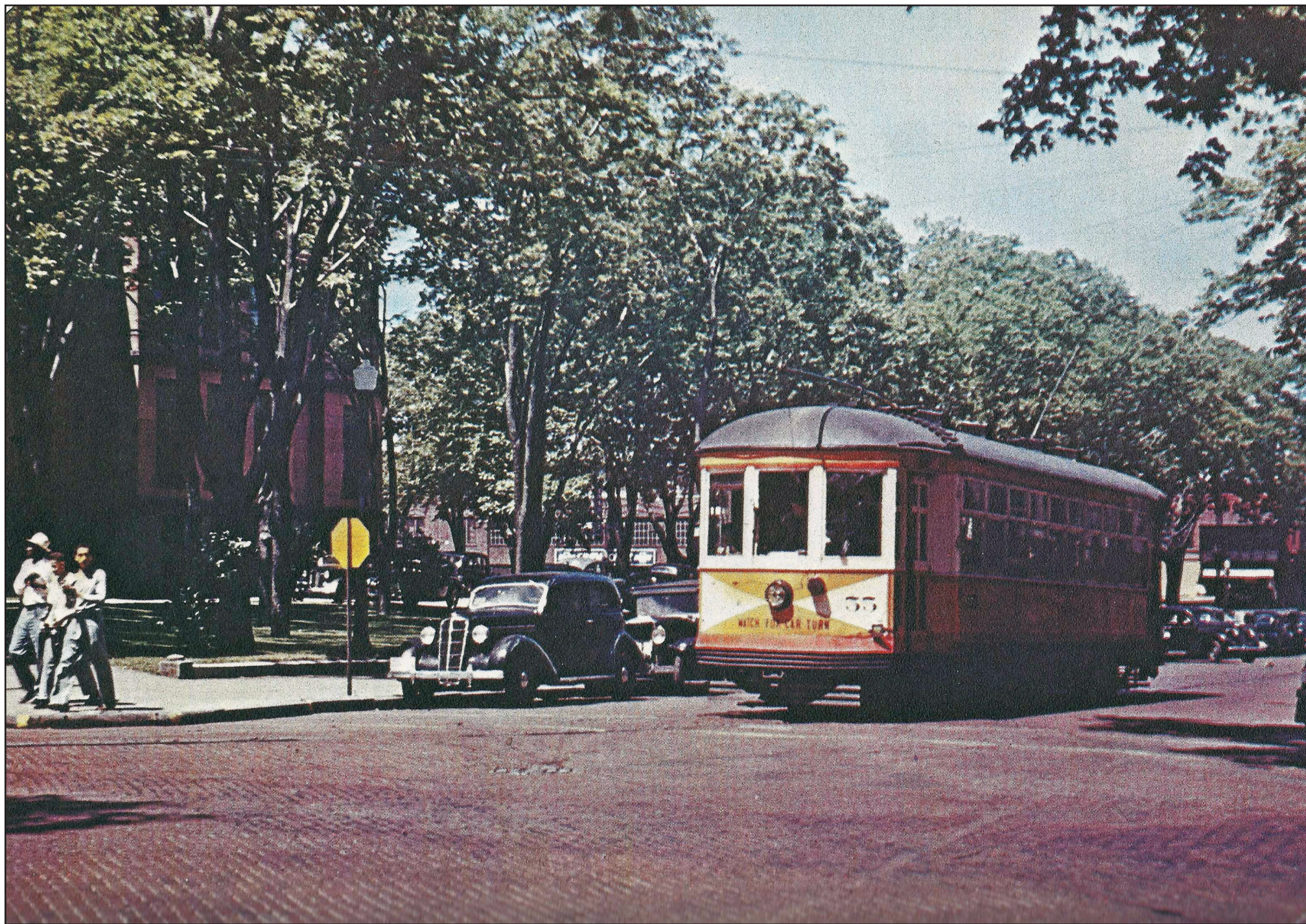
Above right: The north leg of the substation wye. This is the same view as on page 20. Both Bob Mehlenbeck photos.

Right: The streetcar is facing south on Girard.





Layover and boarding took place on southbound Girard next to the Calhoun Theater. Richard Andrews photo.



The last LaCrosse streetcar line was run by eight double-truck cars, #51-57 (St. Louis Car 1916). If the color scheme looks familiar, it's because Mississippi Valley Public Service also owned the Winona streetcars. This Frank Butts photo was copied from the CERA book *Badger Traction*, published in 1969.



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

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